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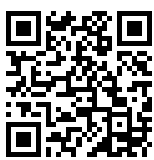

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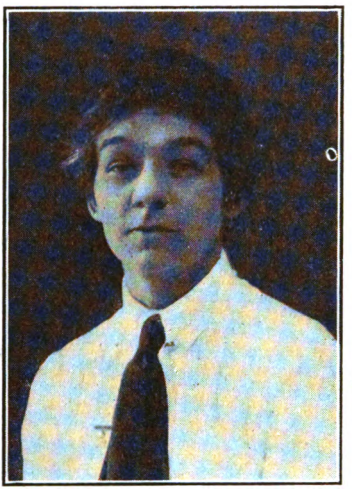

MISS LINDA MEIRS

CHIEF NURSE

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"EVACUATION 114"

AS SEEN FROM WITHIN

BY

CAROLYN W. CLARKE

NURSES' AID, A. R. C.

1919

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TO ALL
WHO KNEW
"EVACUATION 114"

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JOUY

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I

JOUY

ON THE THIRD of June, 1918, a small group consisting of eight nurses and three nurses' aids were hurriedly called together and told they were to go the next day "to the front." The Germans were in Chateau-Thierry, they were on the way to Paris and perhaps this time they would get there. It was a serious business. Americans were being sent up to help stop them. American wounded were being brought back to Paris fifty miles in jolty ambulances and there was urgent need of a hospital nearer. Ten o'clock of June fourth saw us at 4 Place de la Concorde, then Red Cross headquarters, ready to start, but there was a long wait. Camions had to be loaded with equipment for an emergency hospital and we could not leave until these were ready. We were told that we were to go to a position of extreme danger and were provided with gas masks and told how to put them on. We carried these faithfully until the armistice was signed but fortunately never had to wear them. After a while we forgot how they went and decided that the air was so bad inside them, it would finish us as soon as gas would.

Miss Ashe, of the Children's Bureau, whom the aids have to thank for getting to France at all, took her three charges aside and asked us if our parents would blame her if we should get killed. We assured her that they

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wouldn't mind at all, one aid remarking that her mother would be "pleasantly surprised if she ever saw her daughter again." The Red Cross gave us lunch and tea and at five in the afternoon we started, Big Bertha landing a shell in the Tuileries to celebrate our departure. In the automobile which led was Miss Stimpson, chief of the Red Cross nurses, later chief of the army nurses, and four nurses, Miss Bissell, Miss Ells, Miss Rose Clark and Miss Hoyt. An ambulance followed with four more nurses, Miss Whyte, Miss Freer, Miss Slingland and Miss Broeffle and the three aids, Mrs. Stratton, Miss Mary Ludlum, my friend and co-worker since leaving the U. S. A. and myself. The Red Cross officer in charge of our unit was on the front seat of the ambulance. Behind us were the two big camions. We will follow the adventures of the ambulance which soon lost sight of the automobile, but that did not matter as the captain knew we were headed for Montmirail.

We rolled along over the dusty road, followed by the dusty camions and were soon all dusty ourselves. By and by we came to a town where there were soldiers, American soldiers, and then we saw more and more. It was a great sight for us, for most of us had been working for months among the French refugees and, while loving our work, had a desire way down in our hearts to be with and work for our very own soldiers. The soldiers certainly were glad to see us. They would turn to look at the ambulance and when they saw American women going up between their rest-camps and the front such smiles as lighted their faces and such cheers as they gave will never be forgotten by those who saw and heard them.

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We got to Montmirail about dusk and were just thinking how good supper would taste when we learned that the automobile had not stopped there but had gone on to a town called Jouy-sur-Morin. By the time we gained that information it had grown quite dark but we started off again to find our leaders, the camions waiting to come on the next day.

We rode and rode and rode. We could see flashes on the horizon, from the guns and the bright lights of star shells and we didn't seem to be getting anywhere. We decided we had done our duty in trying to find the hospital and went back to Montmirail to the little inn. Among all of us we knew only a few words of French but we soon learned that the inn was full. The landlord opened the dining room door and showed us that even that was full of sleeping soldiers. There was no one in the salon (the parlor) and there we seven nurses and aids slept, two on tables, the others on the floor, supperless and dusty but feeling that we were at last going to have a part in this great big war.

The next morning we were up bright and early, brushed our clothes, washed our faces, had a good breakfast and discovered that four doctors who were to be with our unit had also been looking for the hospital in Montmirail and had spent a comfortable night at the inn, having arrived early enough in the evening to get rooms. While we were grouped around the door waiting to start off again we heard a hammering noise and looking up saw little puffs of white smoke in the blue sky. An air battle—the first we had seen. There were ever so many

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French soldiers about; no one seemed to mind the little white puffs. "A Boche," was the only comment. The French soldiers wore blue helmets; even the hay wagons were driven by soldiers and beside each driver's seat was his helmet and gas mask. We were in the war zone. We were told again the way to Jouy and started off, the nurses in the ambulance, the doctors following in a limousine and then the camions. It was a beautiful ride through tree-lined roads past the long, low hills of France and the wild flowers in the fields.

We arrived at our chateau at Jouy-sur-Morin just before noon, dusty again with French dust which makes the famous French mud but happy and much interested. The chateau was an old country house a little the worse for wear. We approached through a wooded drive-way. Green lawns with beautiful shade trees sloped to the river on one side, while thick woods were bounded by the same river on the other, the river making a loop around the estate. The house had been used for a French convalescent hospital and some of the nurses offered to stay and work with us. Mlle. Brush was with the unit for three months and dear old Mlle. Gilbert came from her home in the village every day of the two months we were there. Some of the French doctors worked with us for a while, and the "pharmacien" still held his former office. We were welcomed by the nurses who had arrived the day before. Miss Stimpson had gone back to Paris. She sent out to us Miss Linda Meirs to be our chief nurse. Miss Meirs arrived soon after we did and we loved her at once. She took a sympathetic interest in her nurses and aids, she loved all American soldiers and worked for them

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with a tireless and never-ending devotion, inspiring all who worked with her to do the same.

A detachment of boys from Ambulance Company 26 also arrived that morning, pitched their pup-tents across the driveway from the chateau front door, and began to be most helpful. We set to work at once to fix up the chateau. There was much cleaning to be done. The operating room was installed under Miss Slingland's direction. At first we used a panelled room, evidently the library, but soon we moved to the salon, which, when it's tapestries were covered by white oil cloth, made an excellent setting for operations which saved many lives. The wards were made ready for patients and we had a good time over it, making up the beds, arranging little tables beside them and seeing that everything was clean and neat. Then rooms were assigned to the staff. We three aids were given a pleasant little room on the second floor, looking out on the lawns which were soon to be covered with tents to house the heroes of Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Woods.

The chateau was our surgical hospital. We had a little hospital in the village for our medical cases, just a few minutes walk from the other. That village hospital was in need of a good cleaning and we gave it one; nurses aided by corps men throwing mattresses out of the window to be beaten and aired in the garden below, scrubbing floors, washing beds and getting the place nice and neat as an American hospital should be. Once after we threw a mattress out, there was much shouting. We looked out and two or three Frenchmen were jumping around

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waving their arms and shouting that we had broken the main telephone line to the front. "Oh, that's all right," said one of the corps boys and had it mended in a few minutes. There was a hand pump in the yard by means of which one was supposed to be able to pump water into a tank in the second story and have running water in the hospital. It didn't work. One of the boys climbed up and looked in the tank, then he threw out a small tree, a French uniform much the worse for wear and several other obstacles. The tank was scrubbed out, water pumped in and everything went all right. This hospital was used for about a month for sick soldiers and quite a number of mumps cases had a pleasant time there. It had a walled garden, roses growing all around and shady trees and the guns sounded far enough away to make it a peaceful haven for boys from the lines.

The chateau was the main hospital. It was the only one after the patients moved up from the village into the big medical tent where Miss Smith gave them the best of care. My first work after the cleaning was in the sterilizing room, packing supplies for sterilization. We just had two little sterilizers to begin with and these were run by two enterprising boys, Bob and Bill, who came with some doctors from Pittsburgh. The first patient, Sergeant Rogers, arrived the eighth of June, with a piece of shrapnel in his right hand. There was great excitement. He was operated on, put in the most comfortable bed and enjoyed the fuss made over him. He liked being the only patient but said it would not be for long, there were plenty more coming; and he was right. More came the next day and more and more.

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Our officer in command was Major John C. McCoy, through whose efforts we grew from a small Red Cross hospital to an army one of the first rank. While at Jouy we were called, first, Temporary Hospital 23, then American Red Cross Hospital 107.

Tents sprang up one after another as we needed them until there were twenty or more. Our dining tent was one of them. In pleasant weather, and it was almost always pleasant at Jouy, the sides of the dining tent were rolled up and the roses looked in at us. Roses lined the walks, lined the terrace and ever so many were locked up in the walled garden. We looked at those through the gate and sometimes the old gardener would let us in. Those roses: how we loved them and how the patients loved them. It would make one both glad and sad to see a great big wounded man reach for the rose his nurse brought him and look at it and smell of it again and again. He didn't speak of his wounds. He talked about the roses and his home.

Many of the boys came to us straight from the field with their First-Aid dressings just as they had put them on themselves. Others came through field hospitals. The doctors in the field gave them their anti-tetanus serum, which prevents lockjaw and to show this had been done crosses were marked on their foreheads in iodine. On seeing a long line of stretchers of badly wounded but uncomplaining boys, the crosses seemed symbolic of something more than a treatment. The boys came in ambulances and had a hard ride. When they were lifted out they would smile at us; with their eyes only if they were very weak. Occasionally one would say: "Gee, what a

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ride" but usually it was: "Hello," or "What part of the States are you from?" or "It's six months since I've seen an 'Honest-to-God' American girl." The boys were taken to the receiving ward where their wounds were looked at and their tags. They were numbered A, B, C, or D according to the severity of their wounds. Their valuables were put into Red Cross comfort bags which went with them wherever they went. On a New York and Boston train some months after the armistice I saw a number of apparently able-bodied soldiers who were still clinging to their comfort bags, relic of some hospital in France, perhaps ours. When the contents of the pockets were safely in the bags the muddy uniforms were removed. Many of them had to be cut off. The boys were bathed and put into Red Cross pajamas. If the women who made those pajamas could have seen what a comfort they were to the boys, all the months of patient sewing would have seemed more than worth while. From the receiving ward the boys were taken to the X-ray room and to the operating room. When we had a rush of patients they would often have to wait a long time and we would give them cigarettes and chewing gum and try to fix them up comfortably on their stretchers. There was no grumbling over the long waits. Often when it came a man's turn he would say: "Take the other feller first, he's hurt worse than me." In the operating room they would take ether almost as if they liked it, and some really were "glad of a chance to go to sleep." An occasional boy, frightened by the noises of another happily unconscious of what was happening to him, was easily reassured by a few words from a sympathetic nurse or doctor. The bits of shell or machine gun bullets were removed, wrapped in gauze

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AN EVACUATION

JOUY-SUR-MORIN

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and tied to the string of the patient's identity disks. The boys were proud of their bits of "shrapnel," as we incorrectly called them, and the larger they were the better they liked it.

The officers' ward and the shock wards were in the house, the others were in tents on the lawn. The shock ward was where the more serious cases were, the ones who might not get well, and it was a joy to see these worst cases well started on the way to recovery. One busy day two patients were brought to the officers' ward, one a major in the medical corps, the other a 1st Lieut. of Engineers. They were put in beds side by side, unconscious, and looking as if nothing could save them. Those two men are alive and well to-day, though one lost a leg. That doesn't seem to worry him. He says he would rather have a good wooden one than a poor flesh and blood one. We had been at the hospital some days before our first death occurred and how badly we all felt. If only the boys would all get well! Dale Scott was buried in a lovely spot behind the chateau where the lawn slopes to the river Morin. We left four graves there and more in the little American cemetery, beside the French one in the village. We all went to the funeral and in the absence of a chaplain Major McCoy read the services. Two of the aids with Mlle. Gilbert's assistance made a wreath of wild flowers. The unpainted wooden crosses which we put up were replaced by white painted ones legibly marked and a little fence was put around each grave. This was done after we left through the kindness of some unknown French officers who left a wreath on one of the graves in the village cemetery with the inscription "Les

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Officiers Français à Leurs Camarades Americains." Soon there was another death, Lt. Ball of the Fourth Infantry, wounded at Hill 204 near Chateau-Thierry, a handsome young officer; and then more deaths. But most of the boys got well and were so cheerful that the hospital was one of the happiest places imaginable. If a man felt badly he just wouldn't show it but would make a joke instead.

Miss Hoyt had charge of the wards upstairs in the chateau. Captain Boyd and Lieutenant Gilmore were ward surgeons. Later Miss Hoyt's patients were moved out into one of the tents and she had good reason to be proud of her tent ward but I always had a fondness for those rooms in the house where we worked so hard together. One of our patients was a corporal from Kentucky who was a saloon-keeper by profession. He had a serious leg wound and had to have his leg amputated. One day when I was taking his temperature a lieutenant was brought in who was just coming out of ether. He was unconscious and was swearing most unpleasantly. That was nothing unusual as many of the boys swore when under ether, but in their right minds their language was irreproachable if they knew a nurse was near. If they did not know there was one around the corner, it was a different story. Our Kentucky corporal began to appear nervous. I asked him what was the matter. He said he just could not stand to have me hear what that man was saying. He got so excited that I left the room until the lieutenant quieted down. The nurse who had charge of the lieutenant bravely saw him through to consciousness. We had with us about that time a number of marines,

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interesting men and brave ones. Corporal Katzenberg, one of the 5th Marines was wounded at Chateau-Thierry, June 11, 1918, after having disposed of thirteen Germans in his short fighting career. He was a typical marine, brave, proud of what he had done, and though he had a most painful wound, never would complain of it or grumble when it was dressed. If it hurt a lot, which it usually did, he would flash his black eyes and say nothing. Another marine we had was just peppered with machine gun bullets. One was flattened against his identity disk which hung by a tape around his neck. All the marines we had got well. They would say, "A marine is hard to kill." One morning on the way to the ward I was passing through the hall and there sat a man with a bandage over his eyes. When the boys looked at you and smiled you could somehow refrain from thinking how they must be suffering but not to be able to see—and he was sitting there so patiently. I went by quickly feeling so sorry I couldn't even speak. If I could only have looked ahead and seen him a week later pushing up his bandage, in spite of the fact that his nurse said he should wait a few days more, and, disclosing a battered but usable eye, remarking: "Now I can see how good-looking you are." There was a good deal of temporary blindness and with the return of sight the boys invariably made the same remark. Boys from all branches of the service went through our hospitals. They fought well, they bore pain cheerfully, they died bravely. All gave a full measure of service and sacrifice.

One day when work was light Miss Meirs let Miss Slingland, "Luddy" and me go for a ride in an ambu-

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lance to Pontiers, where the top sergeant, Sgt. Prescott, was to get supplies from the U. S. Commissary. We lost our way and got rather near Chateau-Thierry. We saw American soldiers with steel helmets and gas masks, camouflaged guns, the network of green above them hiding them from the sight of an enemy aviator, and we saw fields where German shells had landed only the night before. Two important looking French officers in a limousine gave us a most respectful salute. French officers certainly do know how to salute. We were glad we were near the scene of action but Sgt. Prescott was worried and hastened to take us to a safer place. We saw along the road signs we aids had made, with the help of our friend the carpenter, to direct ambulances to our hospital.

On July second we had our first rush, 160 patients arriving in one day. It was my first experience of long hours. I worked from seven o'clock that morning until four the next. In the afternoon tea was served between operations to the doctors and nurses in the operating room. Being in one of the shock wards in the next room, I had some too. Our staff grew gradually larger and among the newcomers who were with us to the end were for nurses, Miss Katherine Smith, Miss Armstrong, Mrs. Keenan, Miss Van Wormer and Miss Jeffries (who would have stayed); and for aids Miss Knight, Miss Sarah and Miss Helen Farwell and Miss McCoy, the Major's sister, who came as a "searcher" (that is to write letters home for the boys and to find out about their families) but who as our work grew harder was found to be indispensable as an aid. There were a dozen or so nurses who came still later, who were a helpful ad-

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dition to the unit, who likewise stayed until after the armistice and there were others who came for a short while to help out. New doctors were always coming. We usually had more doctors than nurses. On the Fourth of July Miss Freer, acting mess-sergeant, had a fine dinner for the boys: chicken, vegetables and doughnuts, each tray decorated with French and American flags. Monsieur Walch, who lives down by the mill in Jouy and has charge of that and several other paper mills on the river Morin, brought us champagne with which to celebrate the day. He himself went to each patient, offering him a glass while Madame Walch dispensed flowers. In the afternoon there was a ball game between the doctors and corps men and the patients who were up looked on. July fifth we evacuated all our patients. We expected a big rush but it didn't come until the fifteenth and we had ten days in which just enough patients came in to keep us occupied. We had time to write letters for them and take them roses and even to take some of them to walk. There are such nice walks at Jouy, crossing and recrossing the little river Morin, through the woods, through the pretty village, up hill and then down by the river again, over the bridge by the old mill and back to the hospital through the rose garden. Dr. Augusta Williams joined our unit at this time, a woman doctor whose sympathy and kindness aided the well, as her skill did the wounded. Miss Elizabeth Frazer spent a few days with us, and her articles in the Saturday Evening Post show her keen power of observation, for we who were the observed know they are true to life.

One morning on our way from our new nurses'

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home, down by the mill, we discovered a company of American engineers camped in the woods, between the river and the rose garden. They were quite surprised to see American girls. They had for a mascot a little fox-terrier, "Petie." They didn't want to take him farther forward for fear he would be gassed so gave him to Miss Bissell who in turn gave him to Major Wright then second in command at our hospital. Major Wright loved "Petie" from the first minute he saw him. He carried him wherever he went in France for a year and brought him safely back to the U. S. A. Soon after the engineers and their big French guns went by we saw aeroplanes in battle formation going toward the front and then came a night when the firing was louder than usual and there was a feeling in the air that something was happening. The next day, July 15th, hundreds of patients were brought to us: we didn't have time to think; and that night a German aviator came over and dropped three bombs on our hospital, destroying two tents, just missing a third, killing three boys, wounding eight others and Miss Jeffries, who was on duty in one of the bombed tents. Bob who used to work in the sterilizing room was one of those wounded. Miss Jeffries recovered but Bob died a week later.

German planes came over the next night but dropped no bombs. We worked all day and into the night and that second night after the bombing we had a thunder-storm, a regular New England one. We had no lights but candles in the wards and the doctors who had been operating steadily for 24, 36, or 48 hours did dressings until midnight by candle light and the flashes of the storm. You

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might think that overwrought nerves and painful wounds would cause cross words and complaining but not a bit of it, cheering words, smiles and jokes. One of our orderlies tacking up a dark curtain in a second story window pushed open the shutter and fell out, landing on a stone porch below. Miss Meirs, first in every emergency, rushed to him expecting to find him dead. He arose, spitting out the tacks which he had in his mouth and remarked, 'He guessed if he'd fallen from the third story he'd have been spitting nails.' More patients came and more nurses but not enough of the latter. I found myself in charge of a tent ward of forty slightly wounded. The wounds needed to be dressed, the doctors were operating all the time; who was to do the dressings? One of the boys who worked all night in the operating room and should have been sleeping daytimes came to the rescue and together we did the dressings, playing doctor and nurse. A real doctor came in just as we were finishing and seemed satisfied with what we had done, saving him time for operations which followed one another unceasingly for days. We had at that time a number of men who had lain wounded in No-Man's Land for four days, without food, catching rainwater in their helmets to drink, with only the First-Aid dressings they had put on themselves. One man in particular, severely wounded, who might have died under the best conditions lived through those four days and was on the road to recovery. He said: 'He'd done a heap o' thinking while he was "out there" and he guessed the Lord had spared him for some special purpose.' He was going to be a "preacher" when he got home.

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The last rush at Jouy was its largest and I, only an aid, found myself looking out for 105 gas and shell-shock cases in big tent, J, half a dozen contagious cases in the Isolation ward, next door, and forty slightly wounded in the tent across the road. "Luddy" was acting as nurse in the receiving ward, a difficult position at that time and one which, from all accounts, she filled in a most creditable manner. Everyone was working hard and neither doctors nor nurses spared themselves. The boys had to be taken care of and they were. The corps boys were great workers and we got along somehow and when things came up which I didn't understand I would run over to Miss Smith in the medical tent and get her advice. In the evening, after giving ether all day, Lt. Phillips, our medical man, would go through my wards and prescribe for the patients and occasionally I would call a busy officer-of-the-day for a surgical case which needed attention. The patients who could walk helped serve meals, wash dishes and carry water to sick comrades. They swapped stories all day long. Many of the boys had seen German women firing the machine guns. They, the boys, would talk about "the woods." One day the Germans didn't budge, the next day they'd be retreating, the next "the woods" were ours. We who cared for the boys lived through each battle as it was retold for us, either by a conscious patient right from the scene or by one under ether, whose descriptions were often more vivid. We lived through the war from Chateau-Thierry to the Argonne only a few hours behind the actual events, only a few miles behind the lines and we learned the spirit of our American men, kind, home-loving and unconquerable. During this rush we had a most interesting

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fortune teller as a patient. He stayed with our unit some time and entertained us with his probable and improbable prophecies.

Another evacuation: ambulance after ambulance rolled up, was filled with patients and sped away to Ferté-Gaucher to the Red Cross train which was to take them to one of our comfortable base hospitals far from the danger zone; but even those were bombed once in a while. The nurses in our house had a morning off; breakfast was brought to us. How we did enjoy being lazy. It seemed like a regular vacation. I went back to duty to the Isolation ward and only six patients, measles, mumps, one tonsilitis and one diphtheria. They kept me fairly busy. "Dip" had special treatments. Everything in the ward was scrubbed up. The beds were set in perfectly straight lines, the supplies were replenished and the Isolation Ward was ready for anything that might come except what did. I was just starting to irrigate "Dip's" ear, which took about fifteen minutes, when the adjutant, Captain Allerton, of Ambulance Company 108, walked in and said: "You don't mind if we take down this tent, do you?" I answered "Certainly not, go right ahead," and by the time I was through with "Dip" my charges were lying in their beds in an open field, the sun shining down on them. We wondered what was going to happen next and soon found out. They were carried beds and all into the back part of the medical tent. That was the beginning of the end for Jouy. On the ninth of August we evacuated all our patients, packed our supplies, folded our tents, even as the Arabs, said "Good-bye," to our dear Ambulance Company 26, which left us for duty at the

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front, to our French friends and our graves; listened to a concert by a regimental band on its way to the Vesle and at ten o'clock on the morning of August tenth we were on our way to Chateau-Thierry, ambulance following ambulance, full of nurses and doctors; camion following camion carrying supplies, going ever nearer the place whence came the incessant roar of the guns.

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CHATEAU-THIERRY

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"HOTEL-DIEU," CHATEAU-THIERRY

(Note the graves in the garden)

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II

CHATEAU-THIERRY

ROLLING along in our little Ford ambulance through the lovely French country we were quite happy thinking we were going nearer to the soldiers. To work for the soldiers, even to share their dangers was our greatest desire. Up to now we had seen little of the destruction of property by war. Of course there had been our two wrecked tents and the brief glimpse of war conditions on the memorable ride to Pontiers. We began to see more; a hole in a wall, a fallen roof, a half a house and a heap of rubbish, shell holes, camouflaged roads, a ruined town, real trenches and barbed wire entanglements. We didn't see many guns; they had passed with the fighting to Soissons and the Vesle. We entered Chateau-Thierry by a pontoon bridge across the Marne and rode through streets where the houses were empty shells, past the Hotel de Ville (town hall), which, in spite of its battered condition, gazed in a dignified manner across the quiet square down the ruined main street of the town at the river, its weather-vane tipped far over the street giving it a slightly surprised appearance. We stopped in the courtyard of a large building with the name "Hotel-Dieu" over its door. It was now to be known as American Red Cross Hospital 111. At first glance it looked as battered as the neighboring buildings, having shell holes in its sides and its windows broken,

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but another look showed a perfectly good watertight roof. The Germans had left it only two weeks ago. The main building had been a French hospital, one large wing had contained the apartments of town dignitaries. There were spacious rooms and some once-fine furniture. The other wing was a convent. The Sisters stayed through the German occupation. In our building as in many others which had been occupied by the Germans, everything was upset. It looked as if the Germans had amused themselves by dumping furniture, ornaments and clothing in the middle of the room and then mixing them up with mud and dirt. The two office buildings at the entrance to our courtyard were in just such a condition and a number of rooms in the main building. An American navy unit had cleared two large rooms of débris and had been caring for our wounded since the Germans left. The rest of the place had to be put in order. We washed off some of the dust we had collected on the journey, had lunch and started right to work. Though our dear Ambulance Company 26 boys were no longer with us, we still had the 108th from New York state, an execllent company. We shovelled out dirt and burned it, we scraped and then we scrubbed; we set up beds and made them, we tacked netting in the windows: the flies were terrible. We had few patients at first which gave us time to fix things. The Sisters' belongings were scattered through the building and some of their furniture was outdoors. All the bath tubs were in the back yard, just why no one knows. It was my interesting duty to see that the Sisters' possessions were collected and taken to the convent. The Sister Superior and I went through "Hotel-Dieu" from attic to cellar and those were attics and cellars and sub-cellars.

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With the help of half a dozen soldiers we collected whatever the Sisters wanted and put it into the convent. Much of their furniture was broken but the Sisters kept it just the same and even collected bits of window glass, explaining that it could be made into diamond-shaped panes when there were workmen to do it. One day the former director of the hospital and the mayor of a neighboring town came to see us. I helped them in their conversation with the Major and also was their guide around our hospital. Their manners were charming, which is characteristic of the French. They introduced us to the French plumber, a very important person. The water pipes up on the hill above the town had been broken by shells: the water, when we could get any, was by no means pure. A number of us were ill before we began to use chlorinated water. We had an American plumber in our ambulance company and he, the French plumber and I went for a walk, examined the broken mains, which the French were already repairing, and discussed the problem of proper plumbing for the hospital. Interpreting has its pleasant side if one only knows the language and not, as it was referred to in a recent article, "devastated French." The nurses' home was behind the hospital and looked down on a little garden full of roses and French and German graves. There are lots of graves around Chateau-Thierry and on the banks of the Marne in the direction of Hill 204. I recall one near the river; the inscription on the little cross is: "Soldat Americain Inconnu." (Unknown American Soldier.) As "Luddy" and I passed, a French woman was placing on it a beautiful bunch of flowers. The French women often take flowers to the American graves. Hill 204 overlooks the Marne and Chateau-

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Thierry. It was covered with wild flowers in August 1918 except where there were shell-holes. The trees at the top had been killed by the firing and stood broken and black against the sky. There were wheat fields all around apparently undamaged by the fighting except for a big shell-hole now and then. Many of our patients had been wounded there and told us all about it. We tried to imagine just where they had been.

German planes came over Chateau-Thierry every night, two or three times. We could hear bombs dropping around but we were not hit again. The anti-aircraft guns made a great noise. There was a soldier on guard at the hospital and when one plane came quite near he started shooting at it, keeping up a little barrage all by himself until some officers stopped him. He didn't know it was against the rules of warfare to shoot from a hospital and it really was noble of him to be shooting away all by himself defending those in his care. In an air-raid the nurses who were on duty stayed by their patients. Those who had gone to bed were supposed to get up and go down in a vault where some of the Sisters were buried or in the cellars of the hospital. Miss Meirs never seemed to think anything would happen to her. Wherever there was danger, there she was. She would hurry around the courtyard in a straw hat or none when she should have worn a helmet, seeing if everyone else was under cover, the shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns falling all around her. There were four of us nurses and aids in one room and we went to our vault the first few times, then we decided it would be just as well to stay in our room and get under our mattresses. We just rolled un-

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der them onto our canvas cots and felt perfectly safe. "Luddy" wasn't afraid at all but she got under the mattress to please us. By and by we got brave and didn't move at all when the planes went over. For a while our doctors took care of the sick civilians of the town, as there was no French doctor among the few inhabitants who had returned and when one did come we let the people have medicine from the hospital pharmacy, there being no other.

About the middle of August there were few patients and plenty of nurses, so some of the tired ones went back to Jouy for a few days rest. "Luddy" and I went and certainly did enjoy it. We wandered by the river and sat under the big trees on the lawn. There were only three tents now; supplies were stored in them. The big chateau, with its empty rooms, the little village, the cemetery, the walks by the river were full of memories, more memories than one would expect to gain in a lifetime and we loved even the sad ones they were so near, so real, so beautiful. But our visit was by no means all memories. We went to Ferté-Gaucher every morning for the milk for our small household, sometimes in the Red Cross automobile and again on the supply truck. "Luddy," Miss Smith and I called on Mlle. Gilbert, our faithful volunteer nurse. We found her at home in her quaint little house in the village. She told us of an American general who had been billeted in her house. He was a quiet man she said and she thought his manners beautiful. She told us his name. We went to see Madame Walch and found she was in Paris but after the armistice Miss Ells and I had the pleasure of going to visit her in

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her home by the mill, a most delightful third trip to Jouy. We had a party while at the chateau. "Luddy" and I discovered some chickens by climbing a nearby hill to a neat little farm. We had those and tomato salad and American canned peaches, with cream from the model dairy at Ferté-Gaucher. The table was moved out on the front driveway which was shady in the evening. There were two doctors, our Red Cross captain and four or five nurses and aids. Afterwards we were entertained by Private Minnie who could tell most marvellous fortunes. We used to have breakfast on the back porch which was shady in the morning and from which we had a glimpse of the river through the trees at the end of the lawn.

We were called back to Chateau-Thierry on the twenty-fifth of August. There were still few patients and I went to work in the officers' ward with Miss Hoyt. It was always a pleasure to work with her. The ward was in the wing and had been an apartment so we had a little kitchen where we fixed up extras for the special patients. The eggnogs were made with chlorinated water, condensed milk, storage eggs and real sugar with cinnamon on top. They were good, too. My work consisted of making beds, taking temperatures, giving nourishments, straightening pillows and moving splinted legs and arms into more comfortable positions. We had some French officers there and they were fine patients, appreciative of what was done for them and most courteous. One was an aviator with a bad shoulder wound. He had to sit up while it was being dressed and it was most painful. We would ask him if he could stand it and all he

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would say was "It is good." He had been wounded each year of the war. This time was his fourth and worst. On September 2nd I went on night duty. "Luddy" was ill and Miss Rose Clark. I looked after them for two nights. It was not hard work as they asked for little and I rested on a vacant cot and gazed at the stars; one could see ever so many from those big windows. When a German plane was near, searchlights would try to locate it and that also was interesting to watch, 'though the thoughts that came with the sound of the twin motors were anything but peaceful. Dinner was served at midnight for the doctors and nurses on night duty. It was a long way from our wing to the dining room, downstairs and through a long corridor and we were not supposed to carry lights. The first night Miss Ells, who was night superintendent at that time, piloted me down but afterwards I had to grope my way alone through a lengthy tunnel of blackness. The next two nights I specialled a lieutenant who had typhoid. We had a rush of patients from the fifth to the eighth of September, men of the 28th and 77th Divisions. Miss Meirs worked for three days and nights without resting. The two Miss Farwells and Miss McCoy worked thirty-six hours at one stretch. I was on night duty in a room near the operating room, where patients waited their turns for the X-ray and operating tables. They were on stretchers all over the floor, scarcely room to step around. I had to see that the worst ones went first and then those who had waited longest. The halls were filled with stretchers, they were always bringing more. We had only a few candles for light. The boys were wonderful, no complaints, very few groans, always said

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they were "all right" and "wasn't it hard for me to have to take care of so many?" Hard for me? I wouldn't give up one of those days or nights, working for the soldiers, for anything else this life can offer. One night there was a thunderstorm. We had two large French windows without a pane of glass in either and blankets over them to keep in the little candlelight. All of a sudden the wind blew the blankets straight out into the room, blew out the candles and the rain poured in on our defenseless patients. The orderly managed to fasten down one blanket but the other would not stay. He and I just stood and held it, keeping out wind and rain, the room and its rows of wounded lighted by vivid lightning flashes. There was a sort of glory in it as if we were stronger that the elements. The nights of September eighth and ninth I specialled a general of the 77th Division who was gassed in the eyes. He was a nice man. I put shaving soap on his tooth-brush instead of tooth-powder and he didn't mind it a bit. He was rather worried about his sight but I assured him he would get it back and he did. I have since heard that he returned to duty before he had fully recovered. He was the very same general who had stayed at Mlle. Gilbert's house in Jouy. The morning of September 10th we heard we were to leave for Toul and that evening we started. There was a disappointment for some of us. Several were left behind and never did catch up with us, "Luddy" and Miss Rose Clark among them. They were still too ill to travel. They stayed at Chateau-Thierry keeping a pleasant hospital for the few American patients from that sector, until they were called back to Paris after the armistice.

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The 108th Ambulance Company left when we did but not with us. A few days later in Toul we received the following:

"To Miss Meirs and her super-efficient corps of Nurses and Aides, we send

A Toast

Here's to the girls of the A. R. C.
Doing their utmost for you and me,
Plunged into this maelstrom of strife,
Always trying to save a life.
Following close on the bloody fight,
Working constantly day and night,
Passing by with merry quips,
Forcing smiles to trembling lips
And so to these we drink a toast,
And echo here our country's boast
That they are the best from a nation bold
Cool, reliant, with hearts of gold,
Efficient, and ready with a helping hand
We're proud of these girls from America land
The boys of Amb. Co. 108."

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TOUL

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NURSES' QUARTERS

TOUL

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III

TOUL

WE STARTED for Toul in special cars and sat up all night, sleeping fairly well. The next morning we stopped in a station somewhere and doctors and nurses descended with tooth-brushes and brushed their teeth around the fountain in the station. It was a funny sight. A car load of American soldiers drew into the station and we gave them most of our rations; we were carrying enough for two or three days in Red Cross comfort bags. We were on the train all day. Part of the time it moved and the rest of the time it didn't. Once we were left for two or three hours out in the country without any engine. We got off and walked around. One boy got left. We never saw him again. He probably joined some other unit. We were on the train a second night, arriving in Toul about two o'clock in the morning and were left in the train yard, again without an engine. Soon after we got there two ammunition trucks collided on the road just above us and it was pretty hot for a while as everything went off. Shells fell around us and soldiers in a nearby train were injured. A large camion and some automobiles came for us and we arrived at the hospital in time for a late breakfast. The hospital had recently been a school and hospital for destitute children. It was one of the best of its kind in France. Mrs. Lucas gives an interesting account of it in her book "The Children of France and

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the Red Cross." Miss Stoughton, an aid, who crossed on the boat with "Luddy" and me, and whom we both admire, had charge of all the well children. It was a grief to her when it was taken over for the soldiers and the children sent to Lyon. Great preparations were made for the St. Mihiel drive. Several of the nurses and aids who had worked in the children's hospital stayed on with us. The entire hospital was in order, well equipped with Red Cross supplies, and there were bright cretonne curtains at the windows. Here we were given our army number, having gradually changed from a Red Cross hospital to an army one, U. S. Evacuation Hospital, No. 114, though many knew us as "Major McCoy's Unit." There were more than a dozen stucco buildings with red roofs and a wall all around, on a hill with a beautiful view. We could see aerdromes on the plain near the river and always aeroplanes. Sometimes an aviator would fly just over the hospital and drop a message for some one he knew. The nurses' quarters were in a little row of houses outside the wall. We spend a quiet first day, unpacking and looking around and that night patients began to come in from St. Mihiel. Those who were on day duty worked until two in the morning and were on duty again at seven a. m. Miss Hoyt was night superintendent. For two or three days more we worked from seven a. m. to 12 p. m. I worked with Miss Slingland in the surgical ward daytimes and in the receiving ward nights: hard work, but it was soon over and we evacuated all but our sickest patients. There were rumors of moving again. Our doctors and enlisted men were ordered forward; just where to no one knew 'though one often

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heard the word "Verdun." Automobiles, ambulances and camions were filled with doctors and men and our hearts sank as they left. Should we never see them again? It wouldn't be the same to work with other doctors. It seemed as if we had been with these forever but it had been only four months. We were left, nurses and aids, to take care of the hospital, with one of our doctors, Captain Kieffer, in charge, one ill in the officers' ward and one other doctor who didn't belong to our unit. We put the place in excellent order, took inventories of everything, packed away the supplies in each ward where the next occupants of the hospital should have easy access to them. Miss Hoyt and I stored away ever so many blankets one day. I did long for a soldier or two to help with the lifting. We had plenty of time to go to town and several of us went each day. We discovered a store where we could get candy and a Y. M. C. A. where we had cocoa and doughnuts. We went up over our hill and saw trenches and wire entanglements, which were ready in case the Germans came nearer.

On the morning of September twenty-fifth an order came for the nurses of "Evacuation 114" to leave for the front at noon. Although we had been expecting it for days it was hard work collecting people, as several nurses were out walking and three had gone off to lunch. After much hasty packing and rushing around we were all in our ambulances by twelve o'clock and we started for a hospital in the town to join other nurses going to the front. We were told not to look out of the ambulances or put our hands out and no nurse was to sit outside. If German aviators went over

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us they were not to know that nurses were moving up. The ambulances started twenty minutes apart. We were in the army now and had to "split our convoys" in case the road was shelled. Our ambulance was third or fourth. Captain Kieffer was on the front seat. In a short time we were on the road to Verdun.

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FLEURY

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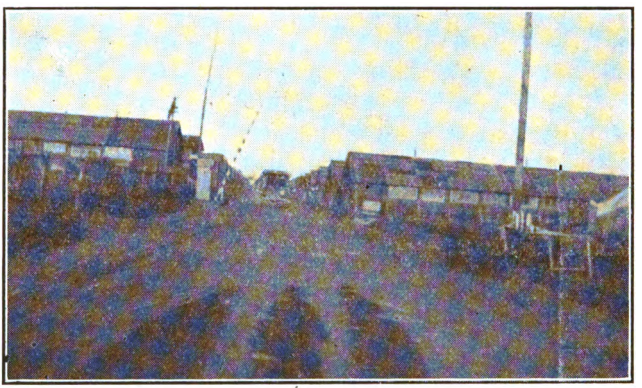

HOSPITAL BARRACKS

FLEURY-SUR-AIRE

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IV

FLEURY

On the road to Verdun the afternoon before the American offensive in the Argonne, there were trucks carrying supplies and trucks carrying soldiers, there were guns, ambulances, staff cars and motorcycles. The last two whizzed past our slow-moving procession. We chatted with the soldiers behind us. They asked us where we were going, and we said: "Same place you are." The nurse beside me had been ill and still felt miserable but wouldn't admit it and be left behind. She did not enjoy that ride a bit, curled up in an uncomfortable position, trying to forget her aching head. We certainly should have missed her if she hadn't come, both for her cheery smile and her efficient work in the receiving ward and elsewhere. We left the main road at Souilly and arrived in Fleury-sur-Aire in black darkness about eight o'clock in the evening to find our officers and men glad to see us and a nice hot supper waiting for us. In France we were often tired and sometimes cold but never hungry, thanks to the U. S. A. and our Red Cross. The soldiers could not say the same because they often out-distanced their kitchens and while the food was there, they went without, sometimes for days. Fleury-on-the-river-Aire was an American railroad head and headquarters of the 13th Engineers, whose barracks were beside our hospital. It was

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also a base of supplies for the army and had a camp for German prisoners, who worked in the quartermaster's department and also for us. Our hospital had been a French one and a few French doctors and nurses stayed on to care for their own wounded. It was a large place, having a main street lined with low wooden buildings which were the wards. There were two other streets on which were the offices, our dining room, the nurses' quarters, the pharmacy, storehouses, the sterilizing house, officers' quarters, kitchens, soldiers' barracks and various other buildings. The French nurses had had small single rooms which we used for two, though I was so fortunate as to have one alone in case "Luddy" should come. It was about eight feet by nine and had mustard colored cardboard walls which went about seven feet towards the rafters. There was a large window with a dark curtain, taking up almost the whole side of the room. The electric light worked. Many of the other bulbs were broken and there were no more to be had. I put up my pictures and felt quite cosy though I often thought of my little white room at home. Now I love to think of that mustard colored cardboard one. Rats the size of cats played around us. They chewed up two pairs of perfectly good shoes. They walked across our beds at night and danced under the sink where we went to get water. We didn't mind as we should at home. "C'est la guerre." We looked after our own rooms the first month or so as there were only two maids in the whole place.

The first day we were there, that great day for Americans, September 26, 1918, we straightened up the wards, made beds (there was a helmet and gas mask

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over each bed) and took in 200 patients. More came each day until September 30th, when we were simply deluged with wounded. For four weeks from 1,000 to 1,500 passed through our hospital each day. The Red Cross trains came in two or three times a day, each one taking away 500 wounded. All surgical cases were operated on unless there was a special train in for "Pre-Ops." In the operating room twelve tables were in constant use day and night. There was a complete staff of doctors and nurses for day work and another for night. The worst cases were kept until it was thought they could stand the journey. In a civilian hospital one would not think of moving them but we had to make room for those coming. For four weeks an unbroken line of ambulances rolled up our main street emptied its human load into our receiving ward and rolled back to the lines to get another. We never refused to take a patient. Sometimes we thought we couldn't take another one. Then an ambulance would come along and the driver would say: "Got some bad cases. Been to five other hospitals and they couldn't take 'em." The beds would all be full. We put the stretchers on the floor. Sometimes the floors and corridors were so full it was hard to get around. Then a train would come. It would be loaded quickly. There would be a little respite. We would start to make up the empty beds but before we got far new patients would come and the beds would be full again and the floor and the corridors. The wards between the street and the tracks were the evacuation wards, for those who were to be evacuated at once, the gassed, the shell-shocked, the sick ones and minor surgical. The receiving wards were on that side operated as at Jouy but on a

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larger scale. The opposite side of the street had the surgical cases, the very sick and the X-ray and operating rooms. I worked in the evacuation wards for a while. There was one orderly to a ward and one nurse or aid to two or three. Just to get the boys fed and the dishes washed was a day's work but there were dressings to be done and medicines to be given. Each boy was given some special attention each day and treatments when necessary. It couldn't have been done if the boys hadn't helped and joked. It was their cheer that made all things possible and we smiled and laughed all the time. The average civilian appears glum and gloomy after working with the soldiers. One day I announced that I wished the food were better. It wasn't as good as usual because there were so many to cook for. One of the boys said not to apologize: "When a feller's been to the front a while he ain't perticular what he eats so long as he eats. The only thing that worries him is not eating at all." They used to call those old barracks "Paradise." It was, compared to what they had been through. One morning, when I was trying to see that everyone was fed before being put on the train, I came across a number of stretcher cases in a corridor, most of whom could not feed themselves. The train was in and was already being loaded. I was alone and had time to think of nothing but giving them something hot before their long journey. Since then I have often thought of one man who in answer to my questions, "How are you feeling? Have some coffee? 'You all right?" only answered "Thank thee" to each one. I suppose he was a Quaker and wonder if he got well. There were so many: I remember their faces, their words, their wounds, but I

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don't know their names or where they came from. One man was brought in dying. He opened his eyes, smiled and said, "It's good to see an American girl." That was all. I was glad I was an American girl and was there. Miss Moriority was a great worker in those evacuation wards, in fact wherever she was. There are a number of boys at home now who might never have been there but for her. We couldn't get any washing done in those four weeks. Some of the nurses washed, starched and ironed their uniforms while working sixteen or eighteen hours a day. Mine went unstarched and unironed. No mail came. Nearly all the staff had "Flu." We had a ward for nurses and one for doctors. One doctor died. Several doctors and nurses were evacuated with the soldiers. We all felt miserably. I stayed in bed two days and considered myself fortunate it wasn't longer. Nobody was gloomy. Why can't we be as cheerful in civilian life?

Part of that time I worked in the sterilizing house, a nice little house all painted white inside with a big counter on which to fold compresses and from behind which to hand out the packages of sterile goods; a large room for the sterile goods, with shelves, a room full of goods to be sterilized, a large room with two small sterilizers in it, a little room occupied by Sergeant McNaugher (otherwise Bill) and another boy who worked in the operating room, and, most important of all, the room for the big French sterilizer, shut off from the rest of the building by a round door about five feet in diameter, two feet above the floor. It was behind that door that my two soldier helpers Bob Gillon and William Gordon,

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spent most of their time with the Frenchman who superintended running the sterilizer. They helped me quite a bit folding compresses, and they were good workers. A picture I shall always remember is the round door opening and Gillon stepping out of the big dark hole in the white wall, a short, thick-set little man, bent over by the weight of a huge steaming bag containing the packages of sterile goods. These were spread on a clean sheet on the floor of the sterile room to dry and then were packed neatly on the shelves. I had not had much experience with surgical dressings at home. Here is one day's work at Fleury, jotted down on a slip of paper just to see how much was accomplished:

96 gowns properly folded and in packages of 3.
600 towels in packages of 8.
72 sheets in packages of 6.
Odd size dressings in packages.
5 boxes of vaseline gauze prepared.

That was my work. The two boys put up 127 packages of 4x4 compresses beside running the sterilizer. Perhaps that doesn't sound much to an experienced worker but it took me from 7 a. m. to 11 p. m. with about twenty minutes off for dinner and the same for supper. Miss Armstrong after working all day in the operating room would often come and help me in the evening and wouldn't let me sit up too late. Every day there was something we didn't have. One day we would be without 4x4's and we would fold 4x8's to make them. The operating room used a case of 4x4's for each twenty-four hours. Another day it would be towels and we

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would tear up old French sheets from the store room. If we were without gowns for the doctors I made them from French nightshirts. We never were without everything all at once and always had plenty of gauze. Every two or three days a truck load of supplies came from the Red Cross. On opening the cases out would drop the cards of the unit at home which had spent so much time making all those things which were indispensable to the wounded boys. I wanted to answer those cards. I put some aside to do so but we were busy and they got lost. It certainly was worth while making those dressings. Some of the boys would look at the ones being put on them and say "I used to see my mother making those before I left home." One day there weren't enough gowns. I hurried to the store room and couldn't find any of the white French night shirts. Sergeant Grotz, who kept the store room was away for the day. Finally I discovered some striped flannel shirts (French) short, tied down one side with little tapes. I grabbed up a big armful, took them back to my "house", slit them down the front, which was to be used as back, did them up, had them sterilized and the doctors wore them that night. I didn't dare go near the operating room. The doctors made no objection to wearing them but did want to know who was responsible. Time off was a thing unknown in those days. I could work about fourteen hours a day in the wards or sixteen or seventeen in the sterilizing house where I could sit down to some of the work. When I went to bed I would be asleep almost before my head touched the pillow and would wake up in the morning refreshed and ready for another day. The noise of the guns was terrific at

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first and there were all kinds of queer, sharp and dull noises which seemed to come out of the air or from the ground beneath our feet. I noticed it more when I was alone in the sterilizing house and sometimes went to the door to see if a shell had landed near. But none did. There was a time when only a few people were going to their meals regularly. When we were perfectly well we could eat "Canned Willie" and other tinned food out of tin plates and drink out of tin bowls and really enjoy it, but if we weren't, it didn't appeal. One evening we had a party at the sterilizing house. Miss Ells and two doctors came to drink malted-milk made with our hot sterile water and eat toast, toasted by the fire of the sterilizer. We had a good time, only, one doctor insisted on eating jam with his toast and was sicker than ever next day. We had a hailstorm on the eighth of October. One just couldn't be out in it, the hail was like little white bullets and hard. We thought of the boys in the trenches. It had rained every day since we had been there and it continued to rain for two or three weeks more.

The day after the hailstorm Miss Slingland took my place and I went to work with Miss Hoyt again in the officers' ward, forty-five beds and floor space for over a dozen stretchers and Miss Hoyt moving quietly and quickly about doing just the proper thing for each and every one of them and making them feel better just by the sight of her. She always did the hardest work herself, leaving the easiest for me, and it was none too easy. We had all kinds; light cases, severely wounded and sick ones. Several died that week. One remem-

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bers best those who died. They seemed the bravest, the best; and yet the others were just like them. We didn't have time to go to many funerals there. We had to leave that to the chaplain and the Red Cross canteen workers, who put flags on all the graves.

A number of slightly wounded were together at one end of the officers' ward and they seemed to have a real good time. As each one went to the operating room the others would jolly him about what he was going to say on coming out of ether. One big light-haired young man came back unconscious on a stretcher reciting Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark." He went all through that twice and then started off on Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." After he was carefully put into his bed again he caught sight of me hovering around to see if he was all right. He fixed a glassy gaze on me and began reciting a poem about a beautiful maiden. I became embarrassed and fled amid roars of laughter from the other patients. One day a handsome lieutenant was brought in with his foot in a splint. Feet are apt to be painful. He tried to be cheerful but didn't succeed. "Oh, ma'm" he said, "I've got such a toothache." I went for our friend Dr. Thomas who came right away and after one look said, "He will have to come to my office." He went out on a stretcher and was brought back smiling in a few minutes, the aching member having been removed. "Now I know I have a foot," he remarked as he edged his way onto the bed.

One day when I was trying to wash as many hands and faces as I could before an interruption came, the

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door opened and in walked a tall figure in pajamas, very grimy, a blanket covered with bits of straw hanging from his shoulders. His arm had been bandaged but the bandage had slipped disclosing a bullet wound. He had been shot through his Red Cross arm-band while carrying wounded. He walked right to me, one hand outstretched. "How do you do, Miss Clarke!" It was my old friend "Tonsilitis" who had the bed beside "Dip" at Jouy. I certainly was glad to see him. He was delighted to find himself in our hospital and had already seen Mrs. Stratton, who had charge of his tent at Jouy before I did. I put on a new bandage, gave him soap, water and something that passed as a towel and he sat and talked to me while he washed his face and I washed others, answering the officers' questions as to how the "fight" was progressing between remarks to me. He said he would see me again after his operation but he didn't because when he came out of ether he was on the train on the way to a base hospital. Two other Jouy patients came to the officers' ward. One was the lieutenant who swore so that he shocked the bar-keeper. He was quiet this time, sick with "Flu." One of our dear Ambulance Company 26 boys went through the hospital. He told us others had been wounded.

I went to work again in the sterilizing house. The work was lighter. I had an hour off and a chance to see what the country looked like from either end of the hospital. The rain stopped The world looked brighter. On the 24th of October the 38th Infantry Band appeared. They gave us a concert in the afternoon and again in the evening. I took my knitting expecting to sit in a

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corner but we danced with the soldiers and had a fine time. It was my first dance since leaving home in 1917. We had another dance a week later but I was busy and only there for twenty minutes, but made up for lost time. There were about 200 men and a dozen girls. We were going to have a third dance but orders came that the nurses were not to dance with enlisted men so we gave it up.

The last four weeks of the war I was on night duty, busy the first week, then the work gradually lightened. I was in the X-ray room which was divided into three parts. The part opposite the receiving ward was where the patients were taken after they had been admitted, to wait their turn to be X-rayed. In the center part were the X-ray tables. The third part was where the patients waited, still on their stretchers to go to the operating room. The duty of a nurse or aid there was to see that the most severely wounded went first and the others in turn, to give them chewing gum and cigarettes and see that they were resting as easily as possible on their stretchers. It was not hard work after that first week, when there were two or three whole wards more than could be got into the X-ray room. The X-ray officers and the six or eight orderlies and stretcher-bearers were excellent people to work with. There wasn't anything those boys wouldn't do for the wounded. One boy let himself be pinned against the wall by the handle of the stretcher he was carrying, rather than let the patient slip. He injured himself but saved the patient. When there were not many patients and the last one had gone through X-ray I would follow him into the operating

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room and try to help there. If that were empty as it often was between 3 and 5 a. m., I would sit in my X-ray room with my knitting and listen to the conversations of my orderlies. They would discuss the war and everyone in it, approve of this organization and disapprove of that and they nearly always ended by saying: "Well, we've got to hand it to the doughboys," and I rather think we have. About three o'clock each morning one of the boys used to go over to the Red Cross canteen and get a big pitcher of cocoa for the operating room and a smaller amount for X-ray. Just at the moment when the night seemed pretty long that hot cocoa gave us a fresh start. The Red Cross canteen was open day and night. Cocoa and crackers for everyone, patients, doctors, nurses, ambulance men; and the wounded who were well enough had chocolate, chewing gum and cigarettes besides. The night nurses often took walks in the morning after breakfast. We would walk to the town of Fleury or in the other direction to the little town of Waly. We used to see soldiers marching up with their gas masks in front, ready for use and their steel helmets and they would wave to us and shout and be ever so glad to see us. It was really difficult to walk we had so many offers to ride from ambulance drivers, truck drivers, and one day a major stopped and invited Miss Ells and me to ride. We accepted and he had to stand up in back as there wasn't room for four on the front (and only) seat. He was going somewhere for supplies.

Our major was made Lt.-Colonel about this time and we were all delighted. He certainly deserved it for

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the way he had worked and we appreciated his consideration for those who worked with him.

In the early morning of November first a big barrage started. We had heard it was coming from some patients the night before but it wouldn't exactly have passed unnoticed if we hadn't known about it. It lighted the sky from one side to the other in big flashes, accompanied by a noise like continuous heavy thunder. The X-ray room was empty and the operating room, so we workers went out and looked and listened and felt that something big was happening. We thought it would bring us in a lot of patients but we had no more than the night before. I expect the casualties of that were on the other side. The night of November tenth, half a dozen nurses and aids were invited to a dinner party at the 13th Engineers' officers' mess. It was a chicken dinner in honor of their colonel. A French woman once said to me: "When you Americans celebrate anything you eat." We have conveyed that impression. The mess hall was quite a good-sized room with tables around three sides. The guests all sat on the wall side so we could see everything. We ate and talked and laughed but the chief feature of the party was singing. Each officer had a special song which he rendered more or less off the key and everyone joined in the chorus. "Lil' Liza Jane" was the favorite. At least it was sung the loudest. There was one French officer; he, of course, sang "Madelon." Just as we were finishing, an officer came in saying peace was being arranged. We scarcely believed it; the guns were just as noisy as ever.

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Miss Ells woke me in the morning of November eleventh, when I had just got to sleep for the day, to say that the war was over. I said: "I don't believe it." Then I noticed that the guns had stopped and in their stead was the sound of all the bells and steam-whistles on the trains in our yard. A Frenchman somewhere was eagerly explaining in a loud voice: "La guerre; fini." It was true: the boys were not being killed any more. That night we had sixty-four patients who had been wounded before eleven in the morning and one other. He was a handsome man from the 13th Engineers and was found unconscious on the railroad track with a bruise on his forehead. He was taken to the receiving ward where the doctor in charge tagged him "fractured skull"; with a question mark. We hurried him through the X-ray, which showed a depression in his skull, and sent him to the operating room before the others, as none seemed as badly off as he did. He was the first case of the evening. The doctors all gathered around. Everyone was looking at him, when he began to come to. He had been over to the French commissariat and indulged in several drinks to celebrate the day, had tripped on the tracks on the way home, too far gone to get up again. The dent in his skull was a natural one. He was put to bed in one of the wards. We saw very little intoxication among the American soldiers and when we did see an unfortunate, he was usually being led along by an M. P. The Engineers had a torch-light procession through our main street that night and all who could watched it. It was all right except that it waked up some of our sickest "Flu" patients. The hospital work went on just the same It

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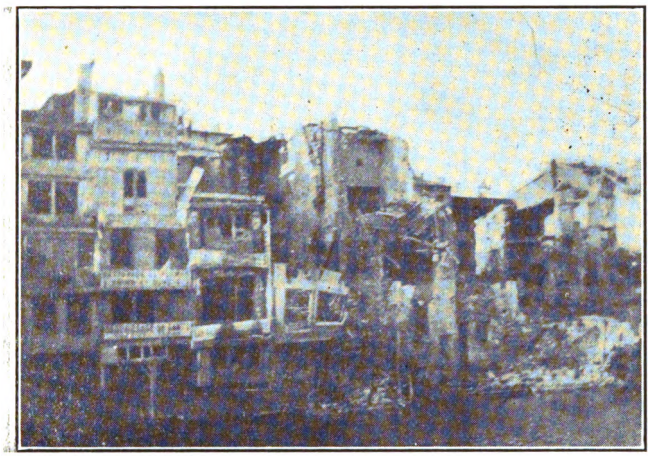

BY THE RIVER

VERDUN

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was hard to realize that the war was over. After the patients had all gone through the X-ray room, about three o'clock in the morning, four orderlies and I had a party as a sort of celebration. I had recently received a box from England, which helped. We had coffee, the kind that comes in a tin with milk and sugar in it. We just naturally took some bread and butter from the officers' kitchen and made toast at our little French stove in the center of the room. We had anchovy and jam from the box. We felt that we were showing the armistice that we appreciated it.

The hospital was kept open until after Christmas, caring for sick men, a few accident cases and some civilians. The nurses worked hard to give everyone in their charge a happy Christmas, and also collected all the children in the neighborhood and gave them a Christmas party. The 19th of November eight nurses and all the aids were ordered back to Paris. Our work with the unit was ended. The day before we left we had a wonderful trip. A big camion full of doctors and nurses went to Verdun. We saw the cathedral, inside and out, beautiful in its ruin, we had our lunch by the river gazing at the wrecks of houses, which had stood over four years of bombardment. "Ils ne passeront pas," had come true. We went through the citadel and saw where the soldiers lived underground. In the streets we saw only soldiers, American and French. We rode on out to the famous "Mort Homme" passing ever so many American soldiers who waved gaily to us, past tanks, rolling across country as if for exercise, past guns and shell holes and places that had once been towns. At

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one cross-road there was a large sign, "To America by way of Berlin." The trenches were deserted. We walked through miles of them, looked into their underground tunnels and rang their gas alarms. We were forerunners of that great crowd of tourists which will for centuries throng the battle-fields of France. It didn't seem just right to be sight-seeing where there had been such a loss of life, but it would be worse if we were not interested at all, wouldn't it? We rode home after dark, in a snow-storm.

The next morning, those of us who had to, left for Paris. It was hard to say good-bye to Miss Meirs and all those with whom we had worked for months. We had been like one big family. Colonel McCoy and Captain Kieffer went up on the train with us. In the Bar-le-Duc station we met an officer who had been in our hospital at Jouy. He had been all through the Argonne fighting and tears came to his eyes when he spoke of it. In Paris Miss Ells and I were so fortunate as to be invited to a French and American dinner given by Monsieur et Madame Walch. Colonel McCoy was there and Captain Kieffer, Colonel Rieder, an Alsatian officer, Madame Walch's sister, Mlle. Bibas, a young artist, Miss McCoy and the two Farwells. We had a beautiful time. "C'etait l'entente cordial." May it be ever thus between us and our allies.

"Luddy" joined me in Paris and we came home together, sailing from Liverpool, January 7th, 1919, on the S.S. "Lapland", 200 wounded sailing with us. We watched them come on the boat, nearly every one ban-

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daged up some way, many limping but all cheery and most of them carrying comfort bags. They lined up by the rail singing: "Hail, hail; the gang's all here," to those who were seeing the boat off. Then they filed off to their quarters. "Luddy" and I watched them from above. They were singing softly: "We're going home, we're going home, we're going home." We stopped at Brest and took on 2,000 troops.

One of the favorite sayings of the doughboys was: "If the Statue of Liberty wants to see me more than once more, she will have to turn around." January 19, 1919 was the "once more" for us, though it is my private opinion that a longing to see France will call many of us past her again. We just looked and looked without saying much except an occasional, "Hi, Bo, here's the Statue of Liberty," from a soldier to a comrade who hadn't noticed. We thought of those who were still longing to see her and of those who will never see her again; those who are resting in France, where they fell fighting for the liberty not of America alone but of the world. There by their comrades in the quiet graves on the now peaceful hill-sides, the flowers of France nodding over them, they rest in peace.

"Father in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy soldiers sleeping."

The battles of the Great War are over but it is for us the survivors to take up the battles of the Great Peace, working ever toward that universal harmony for which our dear ones fought and died.

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